HARAMBEE FLAME

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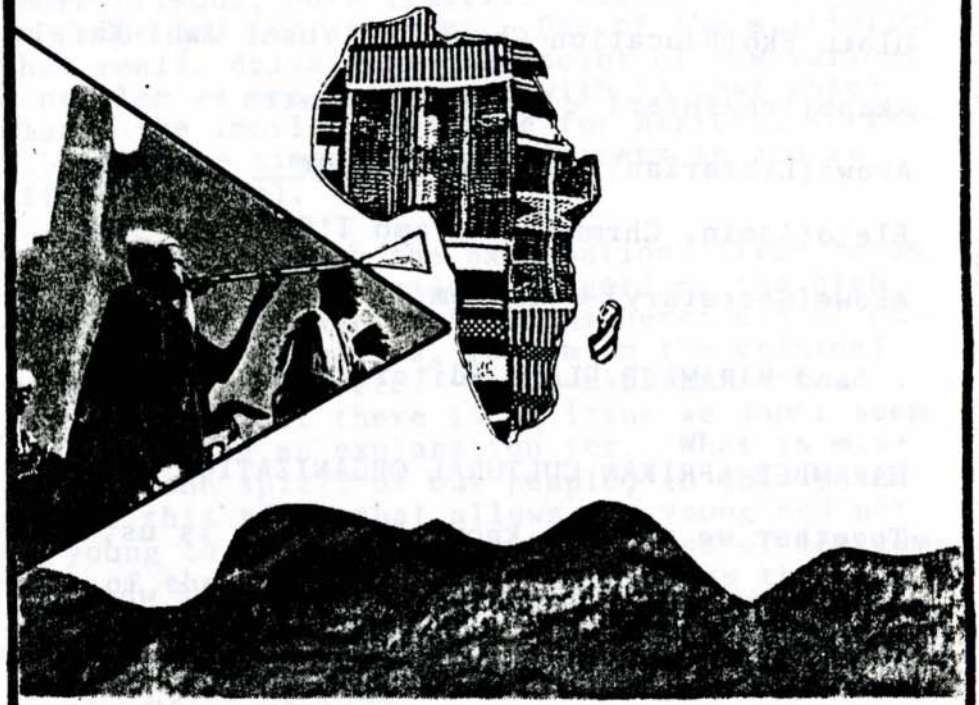

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Afrikans are beautiful in our own right rather than at the expense of any other ethnic group. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

COMMENTARY

In his guest commentary, our Olotu Eko(Education Chairman), Yusuf Jahi Kafele, shares with us what he sees as the "hand-writing on the wall" with regard to the fate of African youth in the U.S. One of the points he makes is that many of us are cooperating both in our own self-destruction and clearing the road for direct destruction of us from without. In this edition's "From Other Sources," we have provided, under the caption "More Prisons, More Time...," statistics related to crime and imprisonment. One of the statistics that really drives home the point of how serious a problem we are confronted with is that which places the imprisonment rate for Africans in the U.S. at five times that of Africans in "South Africa"(Azania).

We're familiar with the explanations given to us by so many of our "leaders" regarding the high imprisonment rates for Africans here: denial of economic opportunities, racism in the criminal "justice" system, etc. These explanations do hold water. But there is an issue we don't seem to be seeking an explanation for. What is missing in the spirit of our people, in this place and at this time, that allows our young and not so young to so casually risk the loss of the company of their families and communities through imprisonment? And in relation to this, what is it with the society at large that so many of us apparently attach very little value to being out in the "free world"?

In prison, one is, of course, separated from family and his or her natural community; is subjected to innumerable rules that often don't even make sense from the standpoint of security or safety; is forced to live, day-to-day, in a gender-wise unnatural environment; and depending on the particular prison, undergo varying degrees of out-and-out physical and/or psychological abuse. But even if prisons in this country were to be made less inhumane and prison officials were to

actually take measures to establish environments and programs that could be conducive to positive self-development on the part of prisoners, who would think it was just as desirable to be in prison as out?

Ask any African person, or any person at all: Would you rather be kicking it with your family members or homeys out here or be stuck in a cage, with suckers you don't even know telling you what to do all the damned time? Who in his or her right mind would answer, "Hell, I'd just as soon be locked up in a cage." But that's the answer we're getting from many of our young and not so young. They are speaking in the most clear of voices--the voice of action. When an African, knowing that there are under-cover cops and police informants all over the place, sells or buys illegal drugs from persons he or she barely knows or doesn't know at all, he or she is saying, "I want to be locked up in a cage." When an African, knowing that banks, department stores, and other commercial establishments often have cameras, alarm systems, or/and other security devices, does a robbery with no plan to overcome these obstacles to his or her success, this African is saying, "I want to be locked up in a cage." When an African draws his piece and blows somebody away in front of several witnesses(or one witness, for that matter), he is saying, "I want to be locked up in a cage." He is saying, "Having the company of my family, homeys, and other loved ones means nothing to me." Besides, the fact that an African would sell some crack or other dangerous drug to or pull his or her piece on other Africans is a clear sign that he or she doesn't care about his or her people in the first place.

What's going on in our homes, in our communities, in our relationships with each other and in our relationships with ourselves such that so many of us are so ready to be ripped off and placed under the direct and nearly total control of those who are alien to us? Let's turn back the clock some. When, in the '60s, Black

Panthers, civil rights workers, and other African people were jailed or imprisoned, it was often because they were acting, or intending to act, on behalf of the collective interests of African people. They were risking their lives because they valued their families, friends, and communities. They knew they were taking risks, sometimes breaking laws and sometimes acting perfectly within their legal "rights" as citizens, and were doing so out of love for their people and true love of self.

Remaining back in time, we look at "Detroit Red." He did his time because he wanted to "get paid" and because he didn't give a damn about his people and obviously didn't really give a damn about himself. After he came to love and respect himself and his people and became "Malcolm X," he valued staying on the outside but, at the same time, did not allow any fear of losing his "freedom" or his very life to stop him or even slow him down from speaking and acting on our behalf.

Many of our young and not so young(males, in particular) are '90s versions of "Detroit Red." We have no love of and respect for our people and little, if any, of and for ourselves. We want to "get paid," above all else, and aren't particular about who does the paying. But we didn't bust out of the womb in this condition. We had to learn to be males or females who, as Kafele says, "lead themselves to slaughter."

Sometimes we learn from something and sometimes we learn from nothing. In our homes, it can be said that we have learned to have little or no love and respect for ourselves and each other from nothing. Our first line of defense against foolishness is our parents. It is their job to love and respect us and teach us how to love and respect ourselves and others. But a person can only do what he or she is capable of doing and can only teach what he or she knows.

If it is true that more than sixty percent of Afri-

can offspring in this country are being raised with no father in the home, then it is clear that these offspring are missing out on some parental love and respect. It's simple arithmetic. Two parents have more love and respect to give than one. One parent can do her(or his) best to compensate for the absence of the other parent. But, even so, one parent doesn't have the time to give that two parents have. Additionally, since we know that many of these single mothers have given birth while they were essentially still children themselves, how can they be expected--no matter how much they may feel love and respect for their offspring--to know how to effectively express these feelings?

For that matter, even when there are two parents raising a child or children, if they're not "grown"(psychologically and emotionally), they can't be expected to effectively express feelings of love and respect to their child or children either. Under these conditions, an offspring, when it comes to questions of love and respect, learns from what may amount to nothing.

While many of our homes may be lacking in either love and respect, or effective expression of the same, they're not lacking televisions. We can learn from something and we can learn from nothing. The fact is that the vast majority of commercial television programs have nothing to teach about love or respect. What is commonly portrayed as "love" on the cube is nothing more than the hots(plain ol' lust). Respect? --"Married With Children," "The Simpsons,"...

But these programs and commercials do have something to teach about cut-throat competitiveness, greed, and obsession with material things(many of which we have no need for). They have something to teach about African self- and mutual contempt.

Check out the common themes of serials and movies featuring our people: African people with problems and finding salvation in Caucasian rescuers,

(Cont. on page 14)

EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., Africa, and elsewhere. "Community News" is another vehicle.

We encourage you to submit your reports, essays, poems, etc. Please enclose stamped return envelope.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Caucasian Businesses Move In On Kwanzaa: A Continuing Tale

"...It is now estimated that more than eighteen million Africans in America participate in some observance of Kwanzaa...

"...we have noted, over the last few years, an increase in the commercialization and exploitation of Kwanzaa...

"The following are examples of what we uncovered this Kwanzaa season:

1. WVAZ/V103 fm - advertised an authentic African 'Kwanzaa' punch for which recipes were to be distributed at five OMNI Super Stores. These recipes were to include Domino sugar, Canfield's carbonated soda, Dole pineapple, Tropicana and Minute Maid orange juices...

2. In New York, the three-day Kwanzaa Holiday Expo was attended by more than fifty thousand people and included more than three hundred businesses and vendors. As reported in the N.Y. Times, '...perhaps more telling was the corporate presence of giants like Anheuser-Bush, Pepsi Cola, Revlon, Chemical Bank, AT&T and Time/Life Books'.

3. Burrell Advertising created a K-Mart clothing ad for Kwanzaa.

4. Proctor and Gardner created a Kwanzaa ad for Jewel Food Stores. While this ad did not directly promote any particular products, the Kwanzaa principles described as the Nguzo Saba had been rewritten and were not the original Kwanzaa principles...

5. Hallmark Cards is attempting to control Kwanzaa cards sales by mass manufacturing them.

6. On the East Coast, Safeway Grocery Stores developed Kwanzaa posters promoting their produce. Although they used variant spellings of Kwanzaa, the Safeway posters were endorsed by several major (white)corporations.

"All of these white major corporations were contacted by the Coalition to Preserve the Sacredness and Integrity of Kwanzaa and informed that their participation in and sponsorship of the Kwanzaa Holiday Expo violated the Kwanzaa principles. So far, only Time/Life and AT&T have sent letters of apology..."

-from "The Hostile Takeover of Kwanzaa" by Dr. Conrad Worrill; Volume IV, No. 3; page 6; MO-BETTER NEWS(South Holland, IL.)

Call For Summit Of African Leaders In U.S.

"A massive roar of support...is echoing Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's call for a Black leadership summit to discuss attacks on Black unity and chart a course for Black survival. Black activists, political experts and politicians agree a critical closed door meeting needs to happen and soon to protect Black interests.

"The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has offered to host the meeting and vowed nothing would stop it from happening...

"'We feel the time is long overdue for us to have a serious dialog in private between national Black leaders', said Don Rojas, an NAACP spokesman...

"Serious issues--promoting self-sufficiency, helping Black women left without men, fighting pov-

erty and other problems--need solutions and a broad array of Black leaders should meet and discuss how to perform the 'major surgery' Black America needs, Dr. Worrill(of the Black United Front) said...

"Other Black leaders, notably Rep. Major Owens(D-N.Y.) and Rep. John Lewis(D-Ga.), are backing away from a united Black front if the Nation of Islam is included...

"'Black leadership must come together, work out differences and start working together to solve the problems of our community', said Illinois Democrat Bobby Rush. 'There's undue pressure, in this instance, from some members of the Jewish community...undue pressure to try to get us to repudiate and it's meeting a wall of resistance...' (According to press reports before Min. Farrakhan's Feb. 3 press conference, Mr. Rush had said the Minister had a lot of explaining to do.)..."

-from "Black Leaders Call For Summit," pages 3 and 7, March 2 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL)

More Prisons, More Time, And The Myth Of Much More Crime

"The imprisonment rate is measured by the number of people in prison for each 100,000 people in the population. In the U.S. the imprisonment rate was about 100 per 100,000 between 1925(when the U.S. started keeping such statistics) and 1972. It varied a bit but always stayed about the same. However, since 1972...the imprisonment rate has skyrocketed. In 1992, the latest year for which data are available, the imprisonment rate was 332. Note that this figure does not include the number of people in jail. In fact, the total incarceration rate for the U.S.A. in 1990 was a staggering 455...

"There are two main ways that crime is measured in the U.S. The first is with the Uniform Crime Report(UCR). This is computed by adding together all the crimes that are reported to the police who in turn report it to the F.B.I. who in turn publish the findings. The other measure of crime comes from the National Crime Survey(NCS)...In order to know about all crimes, it is necessary to conduct scientifically sound surveys of the population and ask people what crimes they had been victims of. This is what the NCS does...

"About 22,000 people were murdered in the U.S. last year...the murder rate in the U.S. was about 10 per 100,000 population) in 1930 and about 10 in 1990--almost no change at all...

"Over the past 20 years, spending for criminal justice has increased by 600%, from about ten billion dollars to 60 billion dollars per year..."

....

"Black people are 12% of the U.S. population and 43% of the prison population. The national incarceration rate for Black men is about 8 times that for white men. The U.S. incarcerates Black men at a rate 5 times higher than South Africa...

"Black people are stopped, arrested, prosecuted, denied bail and sentenced at rates disproportionately higher than white people. For example, according to a study by USA Today, Black people are 4 times more likely than white people to be arrested on drug charges, even though the 2 groups use drugs at the same rate. Another example: An analysis of plea bargaining practices in almost 700,000 criminal cases conducted by the San Jose Mercury News found that "At virtually every stage of pretrial negotiation, whites are more successful than non-whites'..."

-from "Crime And Incarceration: Is There A Link," and "The Crime Of Black Imprisonment," pages 1-3, Fall WALKIN' STEEL(Chicago, IL)

Azanian Liberation Forces Receiving Training In Zimbabwe

"A group of former South African guerrillas have arrived in Zimbabwe to be trained for their new role in a unified South African defense force, one that will commence after the country's first all-race, multi-party elections this April.

"'The main objective of the training program is to prepare the cadres for the challenges of creating their own integrated army in South Africa', said Zimbabwe's Minister of State for National Security, Sydney Sekeramayi, in a statement issued Dec. 28 in Harare.

"The contingent constitutes 328 members of 'Umkhonto We Sizwe'(MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC), and 172 members of the Azanian Peoples Liberation Army(APLA), the military wing of the radical Pan-Africanist Congress(PAC)..."

-from "Black Guerrillas Prepare To Join South African Military Forces," page 13, Feb. 2 THE FINAL CALL

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LUNCH TIME IN AMERIKKKA

Lunch time in Amerikkka!!!
the menu continues...

David Duke stew,
Bill Clinton potatoes,
Rush Limbaugh crackers,
U.S. constitutional corn,
death penalty b-b-q steak,
police brutality upside down cake,
stereo-typical media meat loaf,
holiday mass manipulation pot roast,
ol' fashioned oreo drop-a-dime rice,
Mississippi hangman's cinnamon spice,
U.S. political prisoner candy bars,
Hollywood madness chocolate covered stars.

Lunch time in Amerikkka

um!!! so distasteful,
um!!! so disgraceful,
um!!! so traditional,
um!!! so devilish & hateful.

Give me soulfood by the plate full!

-Shaheed Khaleel Hamza

GUEST COMMENTARY

The government is preparing the people for the blood-bath that is about to take place. By hyping the fright and paranoia that exist with the people(most, unempathetic Caucasians), who know very little about the chaotic forces at work within the urban communities, politicians are paving the way for intensified police-state operations.

It has taken the last 15 years or so to produce the current frightening situation and circumstances we are faced with as Afrikans in America. Through the constant bombardment of the idea of instant gratification(in matters of material possession, for example), as well as that of individualism, we have been lured into the house of slaughter. And the news media biasly televise our trips to that house and the horrendous crimes of gun violence that lead to them, exhorting the people of America that something must be done about the guns in the streets.

Is it unreasonable to believe that the government is planning a national assault on our young brothers in our communities? Government officials are well aware of their large and increasing numbers(Six out of every ten Afrikans in America are under the age of 30.). With our population growing younger and the Caucasian population growing older, racist paranoia is a sufficient motive force for the formulation of plans to eliminate our young brothers.

But the idea of a government-devised systematic and national assault against our young is not one that can be realized without a hitch. The growing call for citizen disarmament, which can be seen as a prelude to such an assault, comes in the face of a simple reality. Of the more than 200 million guns in private hands in this country, the great majority are owned by Caucasians. Furthermore, the great majority of the more than 270,000 gun dealers in the U.S. are Caucasian as

well. So the government is in an approach-avoidance situation. It must approach the prospect of an intensified program of killing and incarcerating young Afrikans while avoiding the killing and incarcerating of Caucasians as much as possible.

Obviously, the Caucasian-run government shall "protect" its own. But it also avoid any appearance of racism in the carrying out of this national assault.

With the media's exaggeration and sensationalistic portrayal of gun violence--not to devalue the losses of our beautiful Sisters and Brothers--and the government's and politicians' manipulation and exploitation of the fears and pains of our mothers and fathers, we are being prepared to accept and even welcome a genocidal program directed against our young males in particular.

We must sound the alarms and take preventive measures now to insure the survival of our young. We must be tough on our own. If not, we will be responsible for allowing them to lead themselves to slaughter.

-Yusuf Jahi Kafele

African people as buffoons, African people as their own worst enemies, African people under the direction of "more intelligent" Caucasians, Africans with bourgeois Caucasian minds. These same themes are repeated on talk shows, but with people often playing themselves instead of scripted characters.

And throughout the garbage heap of television programming, violence is ever-present. Oftentimes, it is glamorized and made to look sexy. As Kafele mentions, it is hyped and sensationalized on t.v. news. And, now, there are the so-called "reality-based" programs: "Prime Suspect," "America's Most Wanted," "Real Stories of the Highway Patrol," etc., which add significantly to this hyping of violence. Though there is rap that is intelligent, constructive, politically and/or culturally conscious, and Africentric, much of it --like much of t.v. programming--glamorizes violence and promotes the devaluing of African life.

Turning off the set and returning to parents, one of the primary reasons why so many African offspring have no visible fathers is the lack of availability of jobs that pay decent wages and/or so many African males who don't have the diplomas and/or training to qualify them for those jobs that are available. In a society where we are taught to measure our worth by the money we have, our social status, and other exterior circumstances, it is difficult for an African, or any other, male to feel respect for self when he hasn't "made it" and sees no prospect of "making it."

When we stir all these ingredients together, we get poison. Our youth walk out of their homes to the streets and run into homeys who have also been poisoned, and the individual sickness is multiplied into group sickness. These youth, having learned no love or respect, or very little, have none to give and see none to attach value. Besides, they've been reared on t.v.

(Cont. on inside back cover)

BACK IN TIME

(Fred) Hampton assumed the Illinois state BPP (Black Panther Party) chairmanship...

One of the talents which seem to have bothered the Bureau(Federal Bureau of Investigation) most about Hampton was his undeniable effectiveness as an org anizer and ghetto diplomat. By December, 1968,... the Chairman was on the verge of negotiating a mer ger between the still-small BPP and a sprawling South Side street gang, several thousand members strong, known as the Blackstone Rangers(at that time in the process of changing its title to the "Black P. Stone Nation"). As it was obvious that Hampton's agenda was to bring about the politici- zation of the Rangers, their constructive engage- ment in community work and a corresponding sudden, massive surge in the Panthers' local political clout...a major COINTELPRO(the F.B.I.'s Counter-In telligence Program) was quickly implemented to head things off. SAC(special agent in charge) Johnson secured approval from Hoover to prepare a and mail an anonymous letter to Jeff Fort, head of the Rangers, which read:

> I've spent some time with some Panther friends on the west side lately and I know what's going on. The brothers that run the Panthers blame you for blocking their thing and there's supposed to be a hit out on you. I'm not a Panther, or a Ranger, just black...

Predictably enough, relations between the BPP and Rangers degenerated into antagonism, with Fort offering to "blow (Hampton's) head off."...

During this period, SA(special agent) Mitchell also utilized a "special relationship" he had with the Chicago Police Department's...Gang Intelli- gence Unit...and Cook County State's Attorney Edward V. Hanrahan to direct local police toward anti-Panther activities. In April, 1969, Hanrahan responded by focusing the attention of his Special Prosecutions Unit on the black community and

-cont. on inside back cover-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The June issue of MOBETTER NEWS is dedicated to the AFRICAN FATHER in America and the diaspora. Please submit articles, poems, letters, or father-wit from, to or about your fathers and/or other male relatives/friends, not later than May 5, 1994. The Headline is "HONOR THY FATHERS..." We will send a complimentary copy of MOBETTER NEWS if the address(es) is provided. Send snapshot(s) for publication in this special issue at the nominal fee of $15.00 per photo. Dedications without photos are $7.50 each. Please identify picture(s) with your name and relationship to the person named in the photo and send to MOBETTER NEWS, P.O. Box 1447, South Holland, IL 60473. We regret photos cannot be returned.

The Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(state prison chapter) annual banquet is tentatively scheduled for June 12. Sisters and brothers mark your calendars. We should be announcing the theme, name of guest speaker, and so forth by the next issue of the HARAMBEE FLAME.

Bandele's Annual Small Business Guide to African-American Events 1994-1995 Edition. The new, expanded listing includes: month-by-month listings, addresses, contact persons, telephone numbers, booth fees, a complete guide to marketing, multicultural events and resources. Ideal for small businesses, organizations, artists, craftspeople, vendors, store owners and performers. For information on how to obtain the Small Business Guide, write to: Bandele Publications
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"street gangs," notably the BPP. SPU head Richard Jalovec thereupon created an elite unit within his organization to conduct what the State's Attorney had termed "a war on gangs."

Source: AGENTS OF REPRESSION: THE F.B.I.'s SECRET WARS AGAINST THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT by Churchill and Vander Wall

.....

violence, experience it on the streets, and come to accept death as being as much a part of life as life itself. They become fatalistic about dying. And because they've seen so many of their homeys, as well as relatives, go to the joint, they accept imprisonment too as just another component of their every-day reality.

When you have little respect and love for yourself and others in your community and don't feel much love and respect coming toward you, how much do you value remaining there? When you see the have-not condition of yourself and those around you and see apparent powerlessness on the part of your community, you don't see men and women. You see wimps. When this wimpishness, and perception of wimpishness, is added to the other ingredients already spoken of as producing poison, the result is a greater poison, a poison that attacks a people's very spirit. Our job is to get about the business of repairing, or resurrecting, our spirit. Until we get around to this business, we will continue to be increasingly vulnerable to whatever plans Uncle Sam may have for our butts. And having knowledge of the past and present history of this sorry uncle, we have no right to go forward with our butts uncovered.

-Editor